

Frank Henry Parker
1910-1984¹

FLOYD G. WERNER

Department of Entomology, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona 85721.

Frank Parker was born June 16, 1910 at Little Silver, New Jersey. Entomologists have known him as a long-term resident of 6-Shooter Canyon, near Globe, Ar-



Figure 1. Frank Henry Parker, undated. Courtesy of Persis Parker.

¹ The University of Arizona Agricultural Experiment Station, Journal Series No. 4069.

izona. His family moved to Globe in 1914, and purchased the ranch from the original homesteader. Frank graduated from Globe High School at the age of 14, but was denied entrance to the University of Arizona because of his age, and spent several years working in the Globe area, constructing some of the first barbed wire fencing in that region, before continuing his education.

He entered the University of Arizona in the Fall of 1927, for a major in Entomology and Economic Zoology. His interest in insects, beetles in particular, had started when another well-known coleopterist, Douglas K. Duncan, came to the canyon on collecting trips. Mr. Duncan was employed in the Globe post office and was acquainted with Frank, Sr. through the latter's employment as a postman on the Globe area rural route.

Even with a grazing allotment on adjacent National Forest land, the Parker ranch did not support the Parker family. The Parkers put in an orchard and a market garden, watered by a quite elaborate system of ditches from 6-Shooter Creek. This creek, starting high in the Pinals, runs most of the time during the winter, and well into the summer during a wet year. Summer rains can cause it to roar.

Frank's labels for the ranch are "Globe, Ariz."; Duncan chose "base of Pinal Mts." The localities are the same. Much of what was collected probably came from the lower part of the canyon, because that is where the ranch houses are. Collecting trips onto the upper part of the ranch would have been called "Pinal Mts." by both collectors. The "Pioneer Pass" of Wickham is in the upper part of the ranch, where dense stands of chaparral oak dominate the scene. The creek bottom has a good mix of mesophytic vegetation, but the sides of the canyon are definitely desertic, with a thin stand of grass and some small shrubs.

At the University, Frank found kindred spirits in E. D. Ball and A. A. Nichol. The department hired him as a laboratory assistant, for the many things that entomologists are used to doing, including pinning an infinity of points for the leafhopper collections of Ball and Nichol's mirids. Ball was Dean of the College of Agriculture for part of this time, but continued his work on Homoptera even while a dean, favoring work in the early morning, which he considered the best time to get things done. The Ball collection went to the U.S. National Museum. I have not seen it, but the selection of Arizona species of leafhoppers that came back to the University of Arizona, in recognition of the state's claim to part of the material, was itself quite impressive. For at least part of the time in his undergraduate years, Frank worked at the Tucson "bug station" of the Office of the State Entomologist. This was an entomological quarantine station, which could cover part of the entrance roads into the state, on a stretch of highway with the unoriginal name of "Miracle Mile." Frank's transportation was a bicycle, and the roads were mostly dirt or gravel. He told of the joys of the trip to Sabino Canyon and how easy it was to stop and look at vegetation from a bicycle. The Santa Rita Range Reserve, which appears on his labels as "Santa Rita RR," was also within his travel circle. A label vagary of this period is his "Tucson" labels. For these there is a simple explanation. The department had a printing press and a few fonts of type. What with labels left set up and type lost, the lower case "s" was at a premium. Frank used a long list of locality labels, and fitted them to field locations quite precisely.

Frank graduated from the university in 1932, and married Persis Stewart the

same year. The Parkers had three children, Caroline, Frank and Stan. In the early 1930's, Frank took to the road collecting and tried to make a living selling specimens. During this period he was employed to an extent by Owen Bryant, who lived in Tucson. The commercial collecting venture was pretty well concentrated into the years 1934 and 1935, with Persis a partner on most of the trips.

He started into a graduate program at the University of California in 1937, and there became acquainted with E. C. Van Dyke and F. E. Blaisdell. He would certainly have gone through the program if financial problems and a bout with pneumonia had not interfered. He had found employment and housing as caretaker of a large church in Berkeley, but apparently had little time to collect, because I haven't found any specimens in his collection from that period. He was in Berkeley less than a year.

For some years Frank then worked as a professional entomologist in the Office of the Arizona State Entomologist. Phoenix was his home base most of the time. We can put dates on his other duty stations from the labels in his collection. During one period the Parkers moved to Blythe, California and Frank worked at the station at Ehrenberg, across the Colorado River in Arizona. In the days before air conditioning, being stationed in Ehrenberg during the summer was hard time.

I first became acquainted with Frank when I started working on the genus *Epicauta* in 1942. My undergraduate employment was for 18 hours a week at the Museum of Comparative Zoology, in the beetle room, with easy access to the LeConte collection. In the course of sorting and arranging the general collection, I discovered that the genus *Epicauta* had a good many undescribed species hidden by misidentifications. Comparison with the critical types was easy, so I selected this genus to revise for an honors thesis in biology. It didn't seem as if there was anyone working on it at the start, but correspondence with H. S. Barber, I think, finally put me into contact with Frank. He also had been working on the genus, and must have been farther along than I. But he had nothing but encouragement for my efforts, and I submitted the thesis, which became the basis for a published revision. World War II and a year in the Philippines for the Field Museum intervened for me. I wrote Frank from the Philippines and arranged to visit him in Phoenix on the way back, in July 1947. He and Louis Lauderdale, then the State Entomologist, took me along on a week's field trip through southeastern Arizona. I had gotten used to a certain level of insect populations in the Philippines, and provided myself with pill boxes and other storage supplies at this scale. The abundance and diversity of the insects that I collected on this trip filled all the boxes in the first couple of days.

I started graduate school that Fall, but Bill Nutting and I were back in Arizona in the summers of 1948 and 1949, running circuits around the state following Frank's advice and using the ranch as base. Frank and his family had moved to the ranch in the winter of 1947, and were busily engaged in making a living ranching, selling fruit, mostly peaches as I remember, and eggs.

Frank lived at the ranch from then on, but in 1952 was employed by the Inspiration Consolidated Copper Company at its Miami mine. He and D. K. Duncan were clerks for the electrical department. Sharing the job made getting off for a collecting or fishing trip easier. They worked together on beetles at night over many years, identifying specimens and interpreting keys. During his employment by Inspiration Consolidated, Frank moved from the electrical depart-

ment to the mechanical engineering department, to the Christmas mine, and finally to the computer division of the Miami mine. He retired in 1970 as chief systems analyst.

Over the years there has always been a string of visitors to the ranch, to see Frank and his collection and to collect in the canyon. Frank had built a small adobe building to house the collection in 1933, and kept it there until he and Persis moved to the main ranch house in 1972. Frank, and the whole family, were ever alert to rare beetles in the canyon. Frank continued collecting trips, but over the years found his familiar haunts and camping areas increasingly crowded. One other car in a campground made a crowd. He and "Dunc," D. K. Duncan, made forays into the Sierra Anchas and to the White Mountains trout fishing, and the Parker family to Cholla Bay and Rocky Point in Sonora for ocean fishing. The early day trips to the Mexican localities were over long stretches of roads of dirt, sand or worse, with the problem of an overheated engine one to be reckoned with. On one such trip tomato juice substituted for water in a Model T Ford. No matter what the objective, every trip was a collecting trip.

The high price of Schmitt boxes early drove both Parker and Duncan to make their own housing. The design they settled on was a large double Schmitt, Parker's larger than Duncan's. The pinning bottom changed over the years. An early choice was composition cork, which they discovered, as many entomologists did, was quite corrosive to pins. The softer grades of wall board were substituted, but these were too hard for easy pinning, especially for the smaller sizes of insect pins. For his best boxes Frank finally used dried flower stalks of century plants, cut lengthwise. These are very soft near the center, much harder near the rinds.

Mr. Duncan notified us in 1963 that he wanted to donate his collection to the University of Arizona. He had sold some of the choicest specimens to Edith Mank, who had offered him a dollar a species for anything that she did not have in her collection. But the collection was a major addition, in both species and localities of collection.

Frank had become acquainted with another beetle collector in Phoenix, Peter C. Grassman, at first when Mr. Grassman was in high school. Mr. Grassman made boxes like Frank's and was well started on a beetle collection when World War II intervened. He left his collection with Frank when he entered the military, and was killed in action in the Battle of the Bulge. Frank donated the Grassman collection, a large part of his own, and the tiger beetles from the Duncan collection, with the intention of using the extra space in boxes to expand the parts of his collection that he still retained.

Ill health forced him to early retirement. Despite problems, he remained cheerful and calm, and ever ready to discuss the issues of the day or the populations of beetles with family and visitors. We asked him to run a light trap for us at the house, and he kept this going until his final day at the ranch, when he entered the hospital in Phoenix and died four days later, on August 18, 1984.

Mrs. Parker has donated the balance of the Parker collection to the University of Arizona, along with the journals and reprints. The Meloidae and Buprestidae, which were his favorites, are particularly impressive. Parker and Duncan kept good track of publications on the beetle fauna of Arizona. Frank had copies of essentially all of the pertinent literature on Meloidae, part of which were typed from the originals when he was at Tucson or Berkeley. There is a start on a catalog

of the beetles of Arizona, with many records entered. Frank's interleaved copy of the Leng catalog has been annotated from the supplements, and has many other entries.

The combined Parker-Duncan-Grassman collections are the product of over a century of diligent collecting of beetles and some other groups of insects. Some of the localities represented have changed vastly over the past 50 years, and many that were easy to get to in the past have now been blocked off for the insect collector. It isn't easy to come up with a conspicuous beetle that these collectors did not find. Much of my collecting has been in the small to minute size range, where additions are easier. But one of Frank's recommendations, which I have passed on to others, is a good one. Never abandon a good collecting site for another that you think will be better. It almost always isn't, and you never seem to get back to the good place in time to capitalize on it. Perhaps this is more true in an arid area than elsewhere, but it certainly holds here.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

- Ball, E. D., and F. H. Parker. 1946. Some new North American *Idiocerus* (Homoptera: Cicadellidae). Journ. Kansas Entomol. Soc., 19:73-82.
- Parker, F. H. 1947. A new *Paratyndaris* from Arizona (Coleoptera, Buprestidae). Bul. Brooklyn Entomol. Soc., 42:31-33.
- . 1955. A new species of *Schizillus* (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae). Pan-Pac. Entomol., 31:148-150.
- Werner, F. G., W. R. Enns, and F. H. Parker. 1966. The Meloidae of Arizona. Ariz. Agric. Exp. Sta. Tech. Bul. 175, 96 pp.